

Pentheny Hotel
45A & 46B King Street
Christiansted
St. Croix Island
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-31

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

PENTHENY HOTEL

HABS No. VI-31

Location: Christiansted, St. Croix Island, Virgin Islands

3 Stories

King Street 45A & 46B

Masonry load bearing

U-shaped 84' x 118'

GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural Character

The original design has been preserved in all its essential features. The wings towards the rear show signs of alteration but these appear to be mainly in finishes. The building is unique as the only preserved example of the large, architecturally pretentious, residential structures of Christiansted.

Condition of Fabric

The building is structurally sound but finishes are badly deteriorated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Orientation:

The main wing on King Street faces due southeast.

Foundations:

Rubble and brick masonry in lime mortar. The foundation is articulated by a slightly projecting plinth from a foot to eighteen inches above the grade.

Wall Construction:

Brick masonry in lime mortar through the three stories of the street wing. The rear wings are two stories. The north wing has a brick masonry ground floor and wood frame second floor while the south wing has 2 stories in masonry.

The front and sides of the street wing are plastered. Towards the courtyard the main wing and the rear wings have exposed lime-washed brick masonry.

The main wing (7 by 3 bays) is built to the former street line and is projected over the sidewalk which runs through an arcade one bay deep on the ground floor. The arcade has elliptical arches with moulded capital bands and plaster keystones. Moulded horizontal bands mark all floor levels. The walls terminate in a cornice and a parapet. The center 3 bays are emphasized by elaboration of the window opening and by doubling the height of the parapet. The smooth plaster surface is grooved horizontally to resemble stone coursing.

Openings - Doorways & doors:

A driveway through the center bay of the street wing provides the main entrance to the building and the courtyard. The drive has a wrought-iron picket gate. Doorways give access to the ground floor rooms from the driveway to the sidewalk. The doorways are equipped with storm shutters of double-board construction. The rear wings have arched gateways with wood gates of braced rail construction.

Window openings:

As previously mentioned, the window openings of the center three bays are emphasized on both sides of the main wing. Towards the streets they have moulded plaster frames with keystones, and on the 2nd, the principal floor, pedimented window heads. In the flanking bays the window openings have flat moulded window caps on the second and keystone only on the third floor. Towards the courtyard the three center bay openings have plaster keystones on all floors with plain opening in the flanking bays.

Windows: Main Wing:

The window openings of the ground floor have storm shutters of double-board construction and no sash.

On the second floor the windows toward the street and in the sides of the main wing extend to floor level. They have double-hung 12-light glazed sash (6-above-6) with double-hinged, Dutch door type shutters that fold back into the window reveal.

The upper and lower sections of the shutters fold independently and are of equal height. Each shutter leaf has two panels. The windows of the 3 center bays open on to a wrought-iron balcony with a wood floor.

All other windows have an exterior wrought-iron rail set in the window frame. The 3rd floor has double-hung glazed 12-light sash (6-above-6) with interior shutters of the same design as on the 2nd floor. Towards courtyard all windows have 3-panelled storm shutters with interior 2 panel jalousie shutters with movable louvres on the 2nd and 3rd floor.

Rear Wings:

The window openings of the rear wings have storm shutters of double-board construction and fixed louvres.

Roof:

The main wing has a hipped corrugated metal roof behind a parapet wall with an internal gutter. The parapet on both sides of the building is raised above the 3 center bays and is ornamented with raised oval panels above the wall piers and 6 elliptical perforations in a row above the window openings.

The rear wings have gable roofs with corrugated metal roofing projecting slightly over the walls and lack cornices and parapet walls. The south rear wing contains the kitchen with an open brick masonry range and a chimney above it.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan:

The ground floor of the street wing contains the driveway through the center bay, a stairhall to the rear and left as you enter and 3 rooms on either side of the doorway.

The stairhall is continuous through all 3 floors. On the 2nd floor it provides access to a living room in the center three bays, a dining room to the south and a parlor to the north, the latter are two bays wide and backed by smaller rooms towards the courtyard which serve respectively as serving pantry and closet. On the third floor the stairhall opens into a central hallway through the long axis of the wing and provides access to rooms placed in a row towards the street and the courtyard. The rear wings contained servants' quarters, utility rooms and stables. On the ground floor the rooms are placed in a row and extend the full depth of the wings. On the second floor, galleries towards the courtyard provide the access to the row of rooms behind them.

Stairways:

The main staircase is a double-run wood stair with open balustrade of turned banisters and carved handrail.

An exterior brick masonry staircase connects the courtyard with the 2nd story gallery of the south wing.

Floor:

The ground floor has pavements in concrete, Gotland limestone tile and brick. All other floors are tongue-and-groove pine boarding except for the open gallery of the 2nd floor of the north rear wing which is paved in tile.

Wall and Ceiling Finishes:

All partitions on the ground floor are masonry and are plastered.

Masonry walls on other floors are plastered and painted. Wood partitions are sheathed on both sides of the structural frame and in some cases plastered or papered.

Ceilings on the ground floor are wood with exposed beams. On the second floor of the main wing they are plastered. On the second floor of the rear wings and on the 3rd floor of the main wing the ceilings are furred wood ceilings.

Doors:

Interior doors are single or double with 8, 4, 3 or 2 panels per leaf.

Trim:

In the main wing above the ground floor all rooms have baseboards, ceiling mouldings and moulded casings around the doors and windows.

Hardware:

Shutters, gates and storm doors have wrought-iron strap hinges, wall hooks and sill and wall hooks. Interior shutters have sliding surface bolts. Doors have porcelain knobs, brass knobs, box or mortiss locks and some wrought-iron spring latches.

Lighting:

The building is wired for electricity. Earlier means of lighting are not discernible.

OTHER

General Setting:

Pentheny Hotel is located on a town lot measuring approximately 180' x 84' that runs through the block and opens on Strand Street.

A courtyard occupies the area between the wings and the rear of the lot.

It is separated from the neighboring properties and Strand Street by a 10 foot masonry wall. A wooden gate between ornamental masonry gate posts provides access to the lot from Strand Street.

Prepared by Frederik C. Gjessing

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Edited by: Jack Barker, Jr.
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